



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana
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IM Weekly Highlights



- IM Planner Marty Angeli continues SOP support to Northern Tier counties.
- IMPD will address critical IM Business Plan next week.

PSSB Weekly Highlights

- PSSB is preparing for a 1033 Program audit in June.

EMPG Applications Due June 30

By Carl Hotvedt, chotvedt@mt.gov

FY2010 Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) program applications are due no later than June 30 to Disaster and Emergency Services (DES). The State of Montana's allocation is \$3,093,877 to assist state and local governments in enhancing and sustaining their all-hazards emergency management capabilities.

The EMPG program has a 50% federal and 50% state cost share, cash- or in-kind match requirement. Allowable costs include a range of emergency management planning activities, emergency management operations, staffing and other day-to-day activities supporting emergency management activities or equipment. Interoperable communications equipment is one of the allowable equipment categories.

Interested local, tribal, or state agencies may find more information on the following web site: http://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/2010/fy10_empg_kit.pdf or they may contact Julia Fenwick, Montana's DES Grant Manager, at JFenwick@mt.gov or 324-3957.

IM Project Directors Approve 60-Day Acceptance Document

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

At its Tues., May 11 meeting, the board of IM Project Directors approved the final Northern Tier 60-day Acceptance Document with Aviat (formerly Harris Stratex) that closes out the microwave project that was initiated in 2006. This document certifies that all hops are operational and connected to the master controller in Helena. It summarizes design and equipment changes made over the past four years and permits a 60-day trial monitoring period. Acceptance of this document formalizes full operation of the Northern Tier microwave system.

Kevin Bruski, IM Executive Director, began IM Project Directors (IMPD) meeting by introducing Marty

Angeli, IM Communications Systems Planner, who started with the IM on May 10. Kevin highlighted several accomplishments, including the fact that the IM has been approved by the IRS to operate as a 501 (c) 4 organization; remaining DHS FY07 funds have been reverted to the IM, which voted previously to use the funds for acquisition of the Antelope Butte site; the DHS FY2010 grant will result in about \$2 million coming to the IM Project; and the Northern Tier Border Interoperability Demonstration Project grant application was submitted.

In other business, the board heard updates on IM Outreach and Education activities, the Northern Tier Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) exercise, and partnership details with the U.S. Air Force. Members also learned that the IM financial audit was scheduled to begin May 17.

Sheriff John Walsh gave the IM Finance Committee report, and Bill Fleiner, IM Finance Officer, reviewed the 2011 budget, which continues to show a shortfall. He also explained a short-term plan for addressing the shortfall. Kevin reported that 70% of PSIC grant monies are under contract. Most PSIC work is still pending due to the weather, although the tower foundation at the Lost Creek site has been completed. Scott Bradford reported on the COPS grant, indicating that the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) consortia has issued a purchase order for Mobile Data terminals; flash upgrades for Northern Tier radios are being funded, and Motorola is in the engineering stage on seven trunking sites in the state.

Members discussed the latest IM Business Plan and the timeline for its final review and approval at the June 8 IMPD meeting. The board agreed to suspend other business at its June 8 meeting to focus on changes to and adoption of the IM Business Plan.

Bill Fleiner stated that Edith McClafferty, Butte Representative, has agreed to initiate legislation for an Interim Study Commission on the IM system. Mark Canton, Motorola, indicated that a Coverage Analysis will be performed, and Brian Sewell, IM Project Manager, reported on the Montana National Guard last-mile hop project, which is near completion.

The next IMPD meeting is Tues., June 8 at the MACo offices, 2715 Skyway Drive, in Helena starting at 9:00 am.

State Agency Radio User Task Force Update

By Garrett Fawaz and E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The State Agency Radio User Task Force held its monthly meeting on May 25 in Helena, and addressed several significant items.

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The request for a mobile training team from SPAWAR for the Communications Assets Survey Management (CASM) tool was approved thanks to outstanding efforts by Scott Bradford, PSSB. This four-hour training program will occur at three locations: Kalispell (June 22), Helena (June 23) and Billings (June 24). Class size is limited to 20 participants. Agencies desiring to send personnel to this training must contact Carrie Castle, PSSB, at ccastle@mt.gov, or 444-2092. When registered, Carrie will forward a CASM registration form that must be filled out, faxed to PSSB and approved prior to the training. As a reminder, the CASM program collects information about an agency's mobile and portable radios, frequencies/channels, base stations, gateways, towers/repeaters, etc.

Task force members reviewed the narrowbanding spreadsheet that depicts funding requirements for each state agency, which totals nearly \$2.5 million. Each agency now has to determine the best course of action for meeting their funding requirements in order to meet the January 1, 2013 FCC narrowband mandate.

Kyle Hilmer, ITSD/FMB, provided an overview of the IM Business Plan and discussed un-resolved strategic issues. Members were asked to review the document and provide their input to Kyle. The final draft will be provided to the IMPD on June 8, which will be dedicating its entire meeting to review and adoption of the plan.

Carl Hotvedt, PSSB Bureau Chief, informed the group that the IMTC and the IM Executive Director, Kevin Bruski, determined that the IM would not be submitting the Encryption Standard waiver because of the belief that the requirement only applies to state agencies and not to other IM members. Further discussion is pending.

Due to the pending departure of Garrett Fawaz from the Dept. of Corrections, the task force nominated and unanimously selected Mike Stapp, DES Emergency Management Planner, as the new chair. Garrett expressed his sincere "thank you" to task force members for their support and efforts.

The next state agency radio users meeting is scheduled for Tues., June 22 at the Old Livestock Building, 125 E. Lockett St., in Helena.

Update on the VC Pass Site

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Steve DiGiovanna, Madison County DES and E911 Communications Coordinator, recently sent an e-mail and photo to explain a slight set back on the tower foundation at the VC Pass site. Last fall, while the footing was being poured for the new tower, the weather conditions changed to blizzard-like conditions that were nearly impossible to work in. During the day-long concrete pour, snow sloughed into the footing

excavation hole. Once the pour began, it continued because the object is to pour the concrete all in one piece. At the end of the pour, about five yards of concrete was left-over, a condition that should not have occurred.

This spring, the footing was excavated (see photo), and it was discovered that the pocket created by the sloughing snow left some areas of the footing without concrete. An independent engineering firm was consulted, and it determined that repairs would be sufficient to bring the exposed rebar footing up to designed specifications.

The tower will be disassembled as soon as the road is dry and equipment can be safely brought to the site. The footing will be reinforced to accommodate the structural needs of the tower.

Repairs are anticipated to be made quickly and efficiently with minimal delays to the overall completion of the site.



Upcoming Meetings

- **Mon., June 7**
SCIP Update Workshop
Helena • 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.
- **Tues., June 8**
IM Project Directors Meeting
Helena • 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.
- **Wed., June 9**
Central Consortium Meeting
Great Falls • 10:00 am – noon
DES Offices, 521 1st St. NW
- **Wed., June 16**
Mobile Data Terminal Consortium
Helena • 10:00 am – noon
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.
- **Thurs., June 17**
I-15/90 Corridor Consortium
Butte • 10:00 am – noon
Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.